

LOVES
YOU

Submit
to OUR LOVE

(please)

EDITORIAL

by Rachel Ithen

During the very first Omen layout of the semester, I was unfortunately off campus visiting a friend on the other side of Massachusetts. Last semester I was used to getting to the Omen office (which is in the Merrill A basement, y'know, if you were curious... like if you wanted to just show up there on Thursday at 8pm... that would be totally okay) and seeing only one or two other people there at most. So I was a bit worried about the fact of this current issue. Not because my absence would harm it that much, but because I felt bad giving all the workload to just one other person.

So I leave for the weekend and come back to hear from Ben, our FANCY BRAND NEW SHINY SIGNER, that more than one person showed up. In fact, he told me more than two people showed up. From this, I imagined a hefty group of three, yes, THREE, people at layout. The thought of three people at our very first layout of the semester was awesome.

Now, I know it hasn't always been so lonely. Maybe it was a little too early in the year for such controversy and some people were a bit turned off by the Omen, or maybe

all of our readers were Div IIIs and graduated last year. But no matter the reason, it was hard to deny the fact that last semester was lonely.

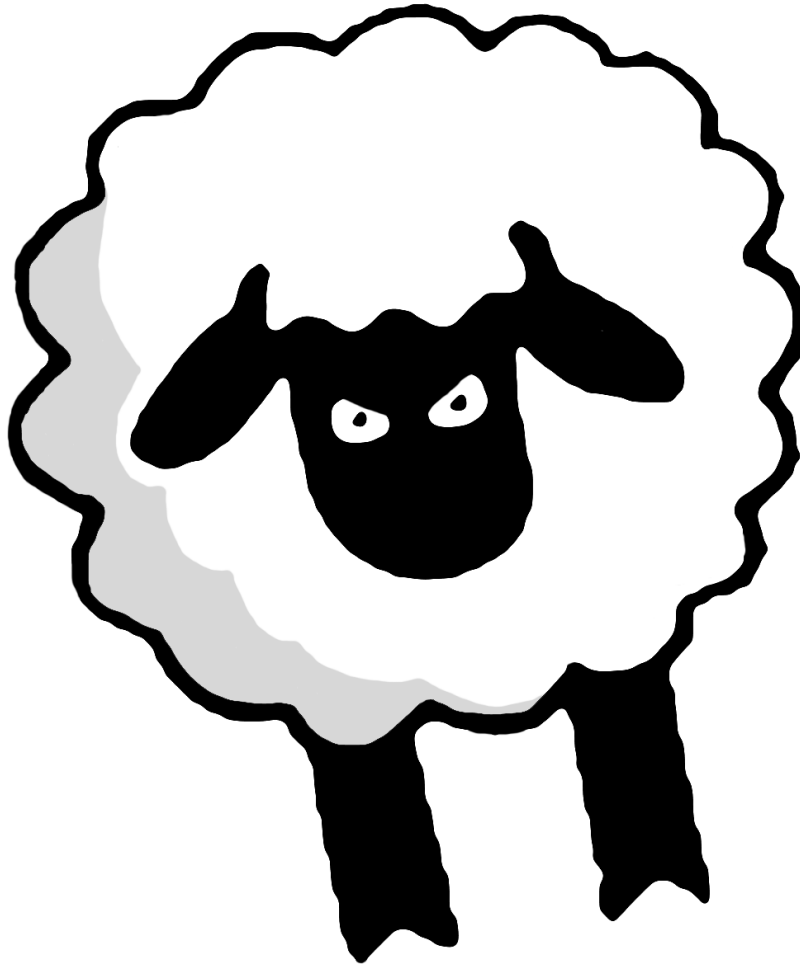
So the thought of three people at layout definitely excited me. You could imagine my surprise, then, when I walked into the Omen office to finish doing layout to see not three, not four, not seven or eight, but TEN names on the editing staff list.

Dude. Ten.

To those ten people: you rock. Maybe you're a signer, maybe you've been coming to Omen layouts for years now, or maybe you were a first-timer. Regardless,

you're awesome. I hope you come back again and again and AGAIN DAM-NIT. Not that I'd pressure you. But wasn't it as magical as you imagined it to be? :)

(Just don't tell everyone else about the unicorns. Then they'd all want to come, too.)



Ten is definitely more than two.

SECTION SPEAK

Open Letters

To the person who was walking down the Dakin F/G stairwell completely naked around midnight on December 7th

DAT ASS!

P.S. Remember that next time you go streaking, stay away from windows.

To my new special friend,
Have a wonderful year.

Patrick Skarupa

Dear guy with the whistle and the opinion,

You are substituting a whistle for a +40,000 dollar per year education to protest what you perceive to be a leading evil of this world.

Good job,
Robert Liota

Dear the readership of the Omen and/or the Hampshire community,

We need to step things up. Like so many things at Hampshire, the Omen is based on a great idea that falters on execution. This crystalized in my mind over Winter Break when I got the chance to see a good friend who goes to Carleton in Minnesota. They have a similar publication, which is called the Clap. I'm sorry to say that the Clap is kicking our asses. It's funny and weird and full of the sort of diversity you would expect from an anyone-can-submit-anything publication. People send in silly cartoons they've drawn, emails accidentally sent to administrators instead of students, pictures of interesting things on campus, etc. In comparison, the only thing I thought was well done in the last issue of the Omen was an article that was mostly blank lines.

This makes me sad about the Hampshire community at large. I know there are fascinating and imaginative people out there. I see you in my living-room, at parties, in Saga, and there must be so many more of you I don't get to meet. All you great people must be producing some kind of thinking or work that could use a larger audience. Yes, submitting to the Omen means being open to some public criticism, but also public appreciation.

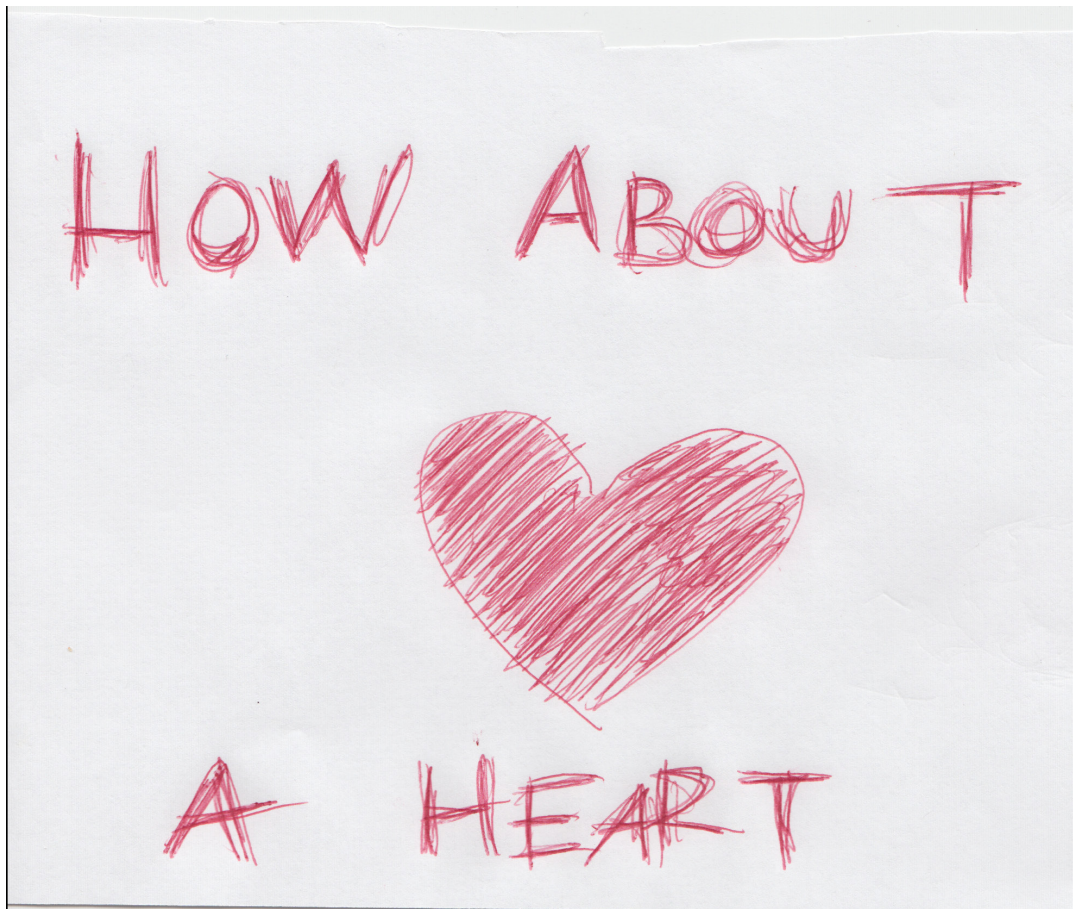
So please, procrastinate on your homework: submit something to the Omen. Silly creative writing, poetry, cartoons, pictures. I know you have interesting rants and raves to air. Write an article arguing which is the best Pokemon. Submit your own "Dear Blank, Please Blank," "You Heard it at Hampshire," or "Texts From Last Night." Make a list of warnings/guidelines/things to do before you graduate for the first years and undergrads. Make a hipster spotting guide. Even if you write something stupid, it'll be a change from the predominant Omen authors of late and you'll show that there's enough energy around this campus to actually take advantage of the opportunity a publication like the Omen gives us.

With sincere hope,
Cedilla Sachar





← Juliet Kahn



American Interests, boys! You know what I'm talkin' about?

We all remember, from our childhood, “the Emperor’s New Clothes”. (If not, Google it.) In the story, everyone assumes that everyone else sees the new clothes the emperor is wearing, and that he himself is the only one not seeing the clothes because he is so stupid.

What does this story has to do with “American interests”? I think American interests (similarly, Chinese interests, European interests, etc) are nothing more than the Emperor’s New Clothes: it does not exist. At least it does not exist in the way you think it does. Here’s what I mean.

The phrase “American interests” is an unexamined consensus --- people think that they (vaguely) know what it means, but could never reach a definite answer. Iraq? Afghanistan? NATO? South China Sea? What does that have to do with your life? If you ask a thousand different Americans, you will get a thousand different answers, many of which contradict each other. Everyone refers to “American interests” repeatedly, assuming that others know what he is talking about, and the audience also assumes that they know what the speaker is talking about. But they don’t. None of us know what the others mean when they say “American interests”. We only imagine that we know.

But many people will say, “Of course I know what American interests are!” They will run into trouble when they try to write it down, or compare his list to a friend’s list. They will find out that common interests are not very common, and universal values not really universal. The reason that we are so convinced of the “national interests” is that our education and media have done such a good job at brainwashing. (Some brainwashing is necessary, and inevitable.) Your President, your parents, your Professors --- all those people you respect the most --- talk about a “common national interests” all the time, and they get so upset when Obama bowed to the Japanese Emperor.

6 The ambiguity of “American interests” creates a wonderland for politicians and speculators. Politicians take full advantage of the “American inter-

ests” and throw their own agendas into the basket. They repeat the phrase so many time, and with so much dignity and passion in their voices, that it becomes dumb and unpatriotic for you to even question what “American interests” are. They silence you by saying that you are acting against America’s national interests, but they never bother to explain to you what kind of interests they are trying to protect. They say that other people are a threat to the American interests because they are not “American” enough --- never mind what it means to behave like an American.

When I look into the “American interests”, I only see personal interests of opportunists wearing the coat of patriotism. Politicians want to get elected. The best way to get elected is by creating a fear that only HE can protect you from. The best way to slam the other candidates is to say that your opponent is not acting in the best interests of the country.

The same is true for many scholars. The best way to get research grants or get invited to panels and conferences (free food!) is by creating an enemy that HE knows the most about. For most people, and on most subjects, China becomes the perfect target to demonize. (This is not to say that China is always innocent.)

Politicians and scholars say that China is threatening America’s position as a superpower. But for the most Americans, what’s so good about being a superpower? It does cater to the vanity, but vanity is not real, and it’s

By creating an unexamined consensus of “American interests”, the politicians inevitably create the “threats” and the “enemies” at the same time. This kind of labeling has a dangerous tendency to turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy. When you call an African American an “angry black man”, he will certainly get angry because of the false accusation. The same happens when you call another country “a threat” to American interests. When

ZILONG'S

you call that country “a threat” 100 times a day, that country will be very upset and will most likely turn into some sort of threat, which “proves” that you are right. This is what many people in this country are doing.

In order to realize their self interests, the politicians put the well being of other people at risk. In order to get himself elected, he makes you hate the immigrants and Muslims and fear a fifth of the world’s population (namely, China). You only vote once in a while, but as a by-product of election campaigns, you live in hatred and fear, day and night.

Similar things are happening in the finance world. In order to achieve an additional several billion dollars of profit, a whole industry went wild and caused a damaged of trillions of dollars and millions of unemploy-

ment. The gain of the industry is trivial in comparison to the loss of the society. Is this the equation of human nature? Are we bound to repeat this negative-sum game over and over?

The next time you hear someone talking about “American interests” (or any so-called national interests), think twice. Think about how those “national interests” relate to you. How does it ever become a “national” priority? Are you caught up in a nationalist fervor? Is your hormone level being manipulated by some politicians whose own hormone level is manipulated by greed? Why are other people your source of hatred and fear? What’s so good about being “protected” from foreigners? Then, look inside of ourselves: hopefully, we will see where the illusions are coming from. The Emperor is not wearing any clothes. 🙈

Tribe Academia

I love my professors. There is no doubt about that. Still, as I get closer and closer to the academic world and read more and more academic paper, I have come to realized that there is indeed a “Tribe Academia”. The tribespeople have their own language, etiquette, and rules.

The academia is a quite unique world. You have to be “that” kind of people to join. You must be an intense intellectual laborer and be willing to use words that usually end with -ism, -ment, -tion, -lization, -ty, etc. When you speak, you quote all kinds of dead people. Your obscure language differentiates you from the rest of the population, which probably makes you feel good and ultra-educated. You have to be willing to sell yourself to a certain “school of thought” and fight for self-perpetuation,

reproduction, and advancement of your sub-tribe. Your success hinges upon your ability to publish long, boring papers on old, boring journals.

Disclaimer: this is a biased sketch. Most of my Hampshire professors are not like this. Hampshire professors are way cool.

My one question to Tribe Academia is their separation from the real world. They make certain assumptions of the real world, and build their imaginative universe upon it. Then they advise those of us living in the real world what we should do, with a authoritative voice. For example, economists assume people are rational and perfect competition is possible. See what happened in 2008?

The worst thing is the academic language. As an international student, I can speak daily English pretty well. However, I was shocked to find out that the English speaking academia does not speak English.

They speak Acadenglish, with many Latin, French, and German words. The different between daily English and academic English is greater than the different between daily English and daily Chinese.

Maybe this objection to Acadenglish comes from my lack of patience when I am doing my reading assignments. The authors seems to take great pleasure in turning simple sentences into huge language barriers. For what, I wonder? To get the worth of your PHD? To confuse your reader? To show off your vocabulary? To torture international students? Most of the times, there are obvious ways to say exactly the same thing in a simple and elegant way. But some academic people twist their sentences in a way that makes you want to punch them. If you want to say A, then say A! Don’t tell us A+A-A+A-A=A!

But recently, my impatience turned into sympathy. The tribespeople in academia are

also human. They also want to feed their family and be recognized by the community. They are just doing a job, like everyone else. In order to get money and fame, they have to publish articles on big journals. They have to speak the language of those old boys who are interested in self-preservation. They think, “the more mysterious we are, the better we will survive. Let’s make the public believe that they are actually dumb and could not have survived without us. Let’s make normal people feel ashamed of themselves by using words they can’t even find in the dictionary! Don’t let the public ever find out that the emperor is wearing no clothes.”

This kind of thinking is understandable. Most people in academia are also victims of this inhuman system. We are all slaves to our desires, therefore we are subjects to those who monopolize what is desirable, like money and power. “How humans drive themselves inhuman”, this might be a good title for a Ph.D.

Maybe it is time for some soul searching among academia. What’s the real purpose of academics? Think about Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. Where did academia come from? Why do we search for knowledge and truth? What is the social meanings of academic work? Are we more interested in getting tenured, or should we follow our heart and shape and enjoy the world? 🐱



READ MORE ZILONG!
wangzilong8848.blogspot.com

Translation Industry, A Hidden Gold Mine

As the world further integrates into one, the free flow of the information is less and less hindered by political or ideological divides, but more and more hindered by language barriers.

A lot of miscommunication and misunderstanding between China and the US arise from inadequate and inaccurate translation of ideas, policies and intentions. Even the state-run media in China does not do a good job to effectively and diplomatically translate the Chinese policies into English. Sometimes, when I read the English version of Chinese news on China's official site like Xinhua and People's Daily, I can tell right away that the translator has never lived in the US and is not putting his or her heart into the translation. This can be a big problem for the harmony between the two countries.

Language is a bond. It enables us to relate to one another. Language is the art of diplomacy. When speaking to the American audience, the Chinese media should avoid quoting Marx or Lenin. Instead, quote Gandhi, Churchill, Shakespeare, etc. We need some truly bi-lingual and bi-cultural personnels in both China and the United States to facilitate the conversation, to take care of the fragile relationship between the two countries.

This is not just true for China-US, but for all countries and cultures. The world sees a urgent need to find a way to translate between cultures and continents at a low price and high efficiency. The market is huge, and I believe that the global translation industry will be a huge gold mine.

In fact, there are already enough resources around! Look at the millions of international students in this country! They are truly bi-lingual, and many of them are truly bi-cultural. They have a sincere willingness to facilitate better communication between their home country and host country. Why not mobilize the international students around the world?

The only thing we need now is a business model and a platform. And again, the world already offers such platform almost for free: the internet. So here's my idea: we can establish an online community for freelance translators to meet online costumers. For example, international students can register and create their profile, just like opening an online store. Then, the customers can come to the website and find translators to do the work. The pay will be determined by the qualification and speed of the translator. Then the translators will be ranked and recommended, like the Amazon Customer Review.....

Translation can be done at home or in the dorms. Many college students can do the job very well at a much cheaper price. I believe it is a great business opportunity to create a real person, grassroot, online translation service. It has very strong social benefits, it increases the mutual understanding among different nations, and it generates revenue for college students studying oversea, it mobilize the idle resources and create value! 🧑🏻

SECTION

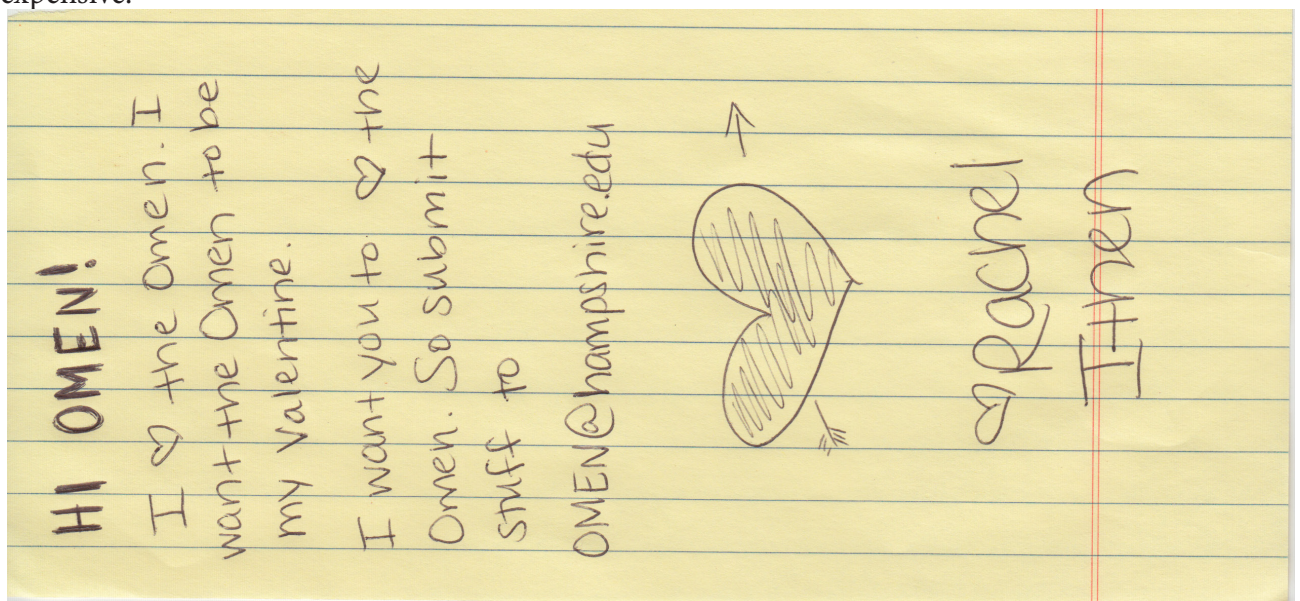
Filene's Basement

(Part One in a Series of Three Installments)

by Greg Larsen

The overpriced perfume filled shelves stacked like skyscrapers above Little Jimmy's head as he wandered through the cosmetics section, tears trickling down his cheeks. It smelled like a majority of Madison Avenue went to the gym and shared a towel, which the men and women of the fashion industry left directly under the boy's nose. I should probably note here that this was not why he was crying. Deep in the back of his mind, he unconsciously felt that there isn't enough justice in the world. Once again, this was not the source of his woe. No, Little Jimmy was sad because he was lost. In a world with more people than jobs and fewer teachers than needed, he was yet another insignificant number in a vast, arbitrary, and self-destructive system. He was lost in a growing sea of faces, a sea in which he would likely drown if he failed to have the right mixture of contacts, good timing, and wit. Also, he didn't know where his mother was.

Little Jimmy's Mother, who, when asked, would refer to herself as Alice, was similarly concerned. The store was out of a popular starlet's Shipentine. How, then could she experience the daring and adventurous combined fragrances of the sea, the seamen, and giant serpents from beneath the waves? Perturbing her even further, they didn't even have any soft pink eyeshadow. Her face would remain its natural deathly pale albino snowflake white, rather than deathly pale albino snowflake white with barely noticeable pink highlights, until she built up the courage to walk to the next store over. Also, the kid was off doing something again, and she thought she probably ought to find him before he broke something expensive.





FREE-ASSOCIATION GO:

Las Vegas is strange.

The airport I am sitting in, mostly, is strange. Since it has slot machines.

And a Popeyes that was out of mild dark meat chicken. What the shit is that?

At least over on this side of the mountains there's no snow.

I saw Utah from above.

I can tell why Bryce 3D is named for a place in Utah.

It is because Utah is made of fractal 3-d terrain.

I was going to free-associate about some annoying Hampshire shit but my heart's not in it anymore.

I'm graduating in less than 100 days and it doesn't seem worth my time to get all het up about idiots in Prescott chucking beer bottles off of balconies or the two year non-anniversary of non-divestment.

I guess I sort of failed at keeping that in.

Div IIIs: vote for me for commencement moderator!

I will not tell too many awful jokes.

Nor will I use my podium to express any particular intra-Hampshire political position.

That's what the Omen is for, of course.

Anyway aside from graduating, I'm interviewing tomorrow for a job at Google.

Hence the layover in Las Vegas.

So if through some miracle I have a job offer in the next couple of weeks, I'm definitely not going to pay any heed to meaningless Hampshire shit anymore.

Meaningful Hampshire shit, I will continue to heed.

Like I'll probably make a graduate gift challenge donation.

Especially if I get that job offer.

Peace and love, everybody.

by Evan Silberman

It wasn't an orgy! We swear!

-Friends and Denizens of K2

by Jalana Sloatman



An Ode to Will Ryan

by Dana Mendes

Shake-belly walrus beard
Smoke 'em if you got 'em boys
We use adverbs well.

What I Know About Wuthering Heights

by Dana Mendes

Oh Heathcliffe baby
Fling that gypsy orphan, baby
Feed me gravel you beast

Interested in blogging
away from the
facebook
world ???

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WAY

2
GO!

Sign up free!!!

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Vikings are
Cool!

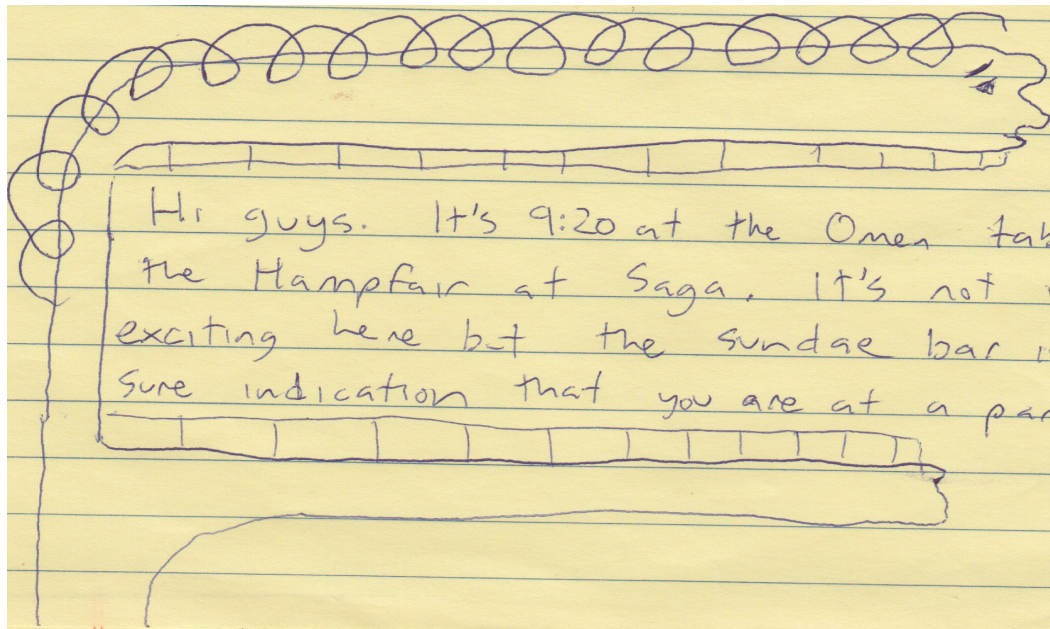
Come to an exhibit
about them!

March 1-6

Library Gallery

Bónði

Freya Roe



Hi guys. It's 9:20 at the Omen table at the Hamptons at Saga. It's not very exciting here but the sundae bar is a sure indication that you are at a party.

Although we are atheists
Apocalyptic
Results are not uncommon

A H A I K U
by benjamin batchelder

That Omen is super
neat. I find it to be
neat. Let's make it the
president.

-Ben Batchelder

Feelings are boring.
71 is awesome.



THEY
SAID
I COULD
FILL UP
THE REST
OF THE
PAPER

so here are 2
wipster
girls

- Juliet
Kahn



SECTION HATE

Another Open Letter to the Hampshire College Community by Robert Liota not January.)

Dear everybody,

Three months ago one of our fellow community members wrote an editorial piece in The Omen meant as a joke. It was in fact insulting to many on campus, and induced unease and even fear for some individuals' social safety on this campus. A dialogue session was held.

I think a key lesson to be taken away from that incident, is that while we all have a right to free speech, that fact does not morally validate or condone saying something that is hurtful or endangering, nor does it release any individual from a responsibility to uphold a certain form of social contract as part of this community.

The reason I revisit that event, is because the recent letter to the community from Students for Justice in Palestine has rather disingenuously turned a very serious caution about the social rights of individuals on this campus into a spring-board for propaganda, one which also subsequently proposes that certain individuals should not be allowed on campus to speak. One that hinges on drawing a contrast between Judaism and Zionism that suggests that to be anti-semitic is not to be anti-zionist. True. But when it is framed as part of a response to hearing about both violent and threatening acts targeting an individual on campus, it seems to affirm these actions in making them distinctly different from each other, depending on whom they are targeting. That is wrong. Perhaps SJP did not intend to sound like they were condoning acts of violence – they certainly seem to be oblivious to much of the contents of the President's initial letter. (It was sent in December,

For instance: at issue in the president's letter were not necessarily acts of anti-semitism. At issue is violence directed toward individuals in our community. What SJP is essentially demonstrating in their first paragraph (and subsequently their entire letter) is that they take issue with acts or threats of violence, vandalism and harassment of individuals when concerning anti-semitism. Definitely laudable. But then it proceeds to backtrack on itself and say, "but wait, what is really at issue in the letter is anti-Zionism!" Or rather:

"However, what is very clear to us is that the letter issued to every member of the Hampshire community was not primarily concerned with acts of anti-Semitism, but with vocal opposition towards expressions of Zionism." (SJP, An open letter to the Hampshire College community.)

First of all, the letter was not in fact concerned with vocal opposition toward expressions of Zionism. It was in fact concerned with this [emphasis added]:

"...students on this campus have been subjected to physical, verbal, and written harassment, threats, and intimidation because of their political views in support of the state of Israel."

Nowhere in President Fried's letter does it condemn anyone for "vocal opposition" toward expressions of Zionism. I would also like to bring up another criticism here, however: Being in support of the state of Israel bears a rather vague association to Zionism. You can be a Conservative Republican and be against a woman's

choice in bearing a child but still be in support of the States of America, just as you can be a Liberal Democrat and believe exactly the opposite but still pledge allegiance to the United States. So it is still a stretch to glean "expressions of Zionism" from "political views in support of the state of Israel." What if one's support hinged on an Israeli state free of religious/racial directives?

I could criticize SJP about the way they approach some of their activism for a very long time, but that would be getting away from the point of this letter, which is that this community has some serious problems with hostility. Rather than allowing President Fried's letter to resonate with a warning about it, SJP has decided to deaden it by piggybacking on it with a letter that boils down to anti-speech propaganda. I think that's disrespectful of this community,

Vol. 36, #1 · The Omen

and I think it hints dangerously closely at excusing the actions that were described in Marlene Fried's December 17th letter.

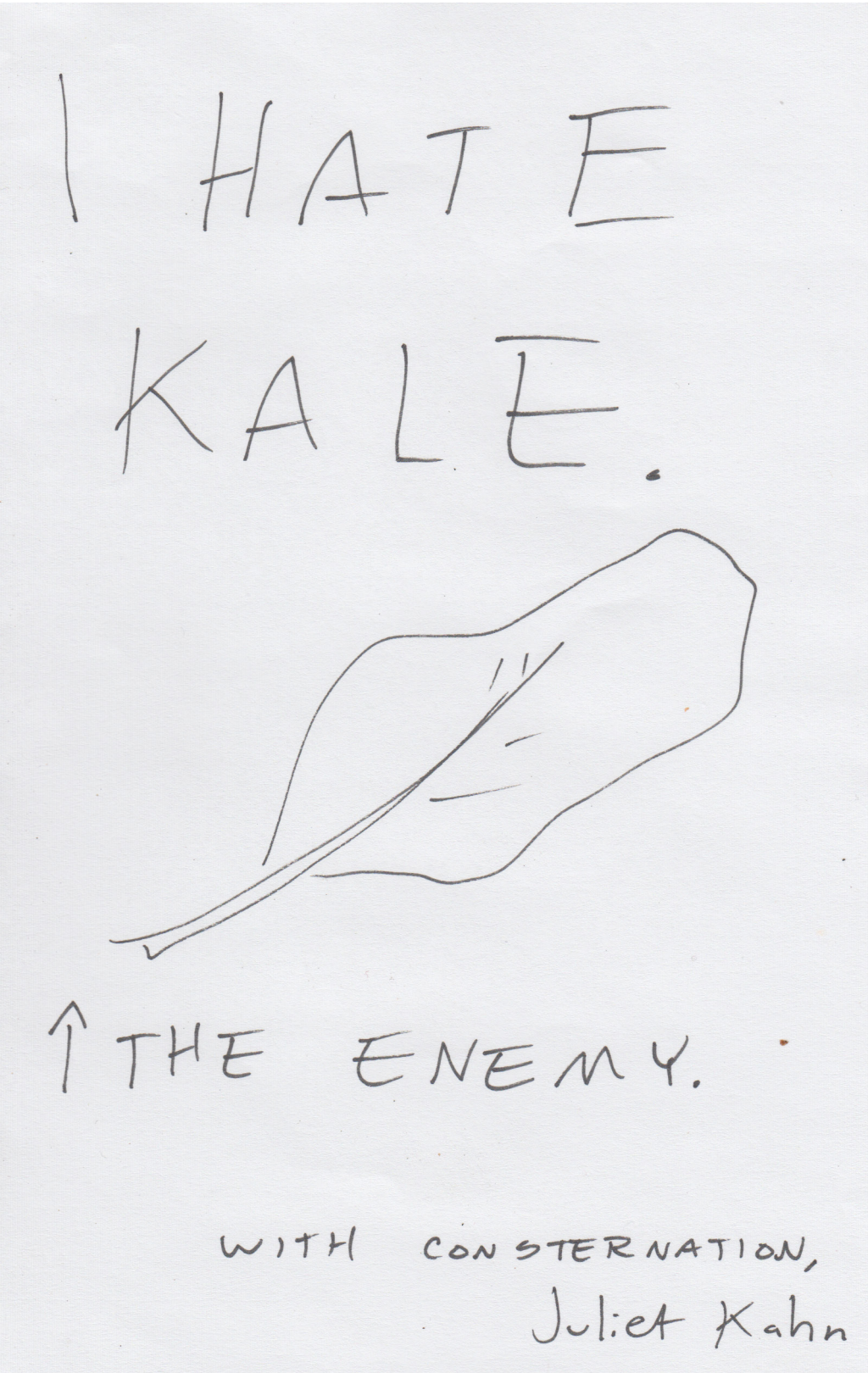
While we all have a right to free speech, that fact does not morally validate or condone saying something that is hurtful or endangering, nor does it release any individual from a responsibility to uphold a certain form of social contract as part of this community.

I ask both sides of the Israel-Palestine issue, as well as the community at large to heed this caution in general.

And stop hitting each other. It makes Hampshire College sound more like a day-care for wealthy brats than it already is.

Sincerest

love, appreciation, disgust, and/or respect,
Robert Liota



I HATE LEAVES...

! !

by Lauren Fraser

Note: Due to misunderstanding last time I wrote something to the Omen, I feel abit of clarification as to my intentions are in order. This article here is completely, 100% serious. Seriously. To view this as a joke would be blasphemous, and you should be ashamed of yourselves for not seeing the truth in my words.

I hate leaves. Seriously! I hate them. All they do is fall to the ground and take up space. Leaves are like that, you know. They are like that annoying relative who shows up out of the blue and asks to stay over for a couple of days, and then winds up staying for six fucking months and eats all your fucking food without bothering to replace it. Fuck! I fucking hate them! They get all gross and try to kill you when it's wet (and you know they fucking plan that...the little bastards!). And then they make the most annoying sounds when they get all crinkly and dry. Just 'crunch', 'crunch', 'crunch' all the damn time. If I have to hear that sound again, I'm gonna choke a bitch!

Fuckin' leaves. They should all just go away and die.

But it's not the leaves' faults. They didn't ask to be the bane of my existence, tormenting my soul with every moment they flutter in the wind. It's the trees.

That's right...it's the goddamn trees' fault! They were the ones who spawned the leaves in the first place.

Fuckin' shit, man! Reagan was right! You know the world's gone to shit when fuckin' Reagan was right!

So, I am proposing this idea. We burn the trees! That's right...you heard me! BURN THE LITTLE FUCKERS

TO THE GROUND!!!!!!!!!!!!

We need to round up every last tree in the whole damn world – from oak trees to that damn ficus in your mother’s living room – and set them all ablaze. And then dance victoriously on the ashes. DANCE! VICTORIOUSLY!

[cue dramatic evil laughter for next five minutes]

[if you want to shave
your head bald, don an eye
patch, and stroke a white
cat...that works too]

In case you weren't reading too closely, I'll repeat the plan. At midnight on the night of the next full moon, we must all congregate at a secret location (to be specified by carrier pigeon at a later date) armed with matches and kerosene, and we shall set the forests surrounding

Hampshire on fire.

Perhaps we will sacrifice a virgin and three she-goats to Odin while we're at it. 🐐

CONTR O
VERSIAL
STATEMENT
ABOUT
IDENTITY
GROUP

- Juliet Kahn



by Alexander B. Vercoutere

